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THE SECOND CRUCIFIXION

By Paul Stein

Drama in four acts and seven scenes.

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CHARACTERS

Andrew, a farmer.

Eve, his wife.

Mary, their daughter.

Felix, a close neighbor of Andrew's.

Louise, his wife.

Judah }
} Their children
Alma }

David, a peddler.

Messiah, his son.

Henry }
} His closest followers.
John }

Barbara, thetown wag.

The Reverend Edmond Clement.

Fate, his wife.

Matthew Norman, brother of Fate, school superintendant and teacher.

Walter Simpson, town official.

Dexter, Constable, then Mayor.

Patrick, chief of police.

The People.

Militia.

Students.

Act I.

Before the house of Andrew, on a farm. Summer, the end of July, 1916.

Act II., Scene 1.

Mr. Edmond Clement's reception room, nine months later, the early part of May, 1917.

Act II., Scene 2.

Before the house of Andrew, several hours later.

Act III., Scene 1.

On a mountain, before a splendid temple, twenty years later, the end of May, 1937.

Act. III., Scene 2.

At Mr. Walter Simpson's, in a magnificent reception-room, the same evening.

Act. IV., Scene 1.

Messiah's school, a day later.

Act. IV., Scene 2.

On the mountain, before a gallows not far from the temple, a few hours later.

Act I.

(Before the house of Andrew, Sunday, before sundown. Andrew, Eve, Felix and Louise are sitting in conversation on the steps of the open porch and on the porch itself.)

Judah. (Stands leaning against a corner, puts in a word now and then and casts an occasional, furtive glance into the house, as if looking for someone.)

Eve. Sunday is now almost gone.

Felix. Ho-hum, we'll have to get into the traces once again.

Louise. What else wouldya like? A man has to work, and when he gets a day's rest, he should be thankful.

Felix. (Yawning). No way out. Can ye help it? Ye've got to work whether ye want it or no.

Judah. If we'd only be workin' for something. But if we've got to work all our life for the devil, ye can keep that kind of work for yourself.

Louise. Ha - ye've got something to say on it. What a business ye've picked out for yourself. He couldn't think of anything else but to become a sailor'.

Judah. Why, sure'. Do ye think I'd scratch the earth for a lousy crust of bread?

Felix. Shut up'. Now hold your tongue. Where did ye pick up such language?

Louise. Take a good look at our holy man. We thought he'd grow into a priest, so he's gone and become a sea-farin' man.

Judah. (Laughs loud and raucously).

Felix. I warned ye not to send him prayin' so often to church. No good ever came from too much prayer.

Louise. I send him'. He'd run by himself. Ye'd swear he really meant it. Now just imagine him becomin' a sailor.

Judah. Why, sure'. I wouldn't sit in one place when the world is so big.

Eve. It is good everywhere, my son, but still better at home. A man must have a home.

Judah. (Respectfully). Who says it's too late. If the right thing turned up, I'd settle down. If I have to, I will, and I have strong hands. But what's to keep me here. Stay here, like this -- I can't. I mean I have nothin' to lose.

Felix. That's enough. If ye can't say plain what ye have to say, don't say anything.

Judah. What's the use, ye're only wastin' breath. I guess I'd better be goin'. (Bashfully). Alma's brought along a girl-friend, she's a peach, ha-ha-ha'. (he goes).

Eve. Ye'd better keep your eye open to see what friends your Alma is makin'. I watched her this mornin' in church. Instead of prayin' she was makin' eyes at the boys.

Felix. That's why your Mary makes up for all of us. Ye might think her flirtin' with Jesus rather than prayin'. She never takes her eye off'n him and never lets a word of prayer slip out.

Eve. When ye give yourself up to God, ye pray wi' the heart and not wi' the lips. Mary's like mine, ye needn't fear, don't grown on trees.

Andrew. There ye are, just like her mother.

Louise. Where does she keep herself all day long? The girl's afraid to come among folks as if they'd eat her up alive'.

Eve. What good her sittin' here listenin' to us clever folk?

Felix. She must be a wise sort, in that case.

Eve. Well, that's just what sheis. She's not the chatterin' kind. She'd rather be alone by herself, in the woods.

Felix. Ye'd better watch who she meets there. It's been known before that "still waters run deep".

Andrew. What is there to watch? She's always taken up with the holy scriptures. If ye even mention 'marriage' to her, she opens a pair of eyes like as if she's fallen down from another planet.

Felix. It looks like your daughter is already taken, and my brat is thinkin' about settin' up a match with her, he-he'. We'll have to cure him of her in time before he starts takin' it too much to heart. He sniffs at the house like a bloodhound, ha-ha'. Don't think he was talkin' thru his hat before; the boy's dead earnest.

Eve. I don't know as your Judah'd ever be a match for her. Ye see, she's---different.

Louise. Well, why don't ye make her marry the man in the moon?

Felix. Let her go to a nunnery, in that case, and have it over with, he-he-he'.

Eve. She don't believe in lockin' herself up. God, she says, can't be found behind thick walls. In the open, between sky an' earth, she sees Him, and from there He speaks to her. It draws her into the woods where there is no one. Ye must separate from this sinful life so's ye could give yourself to God.

Felix. (jocosely to Andrew)/ It looks like your wife aint all there neither, ha-ha'. Tell us, Eve, maybe it's your Mary who's been takin sunbaths in the little meadow? He-he-he, not a bad way to serve God'.

Eve. (somewhat worried). What do ye mean? How could ye think it?

Felix. Oh, I dunno. Only old Daniel once told methat he's seen a young girl time an' again undress there in her birthday clo'es, then bow to the sun and hum a tune. He marvelled to find a girl so deep in the woods alone. But he'd seen it more than once.

Eve. (terror-stricken). Butno one goes that far. It's dangerous.

Felix. That's just what old Daniel says. Since the wolf was seen, no one goes there, an' yet here's a girl---wi'bare buttocks in the bargain. Just ask 'er yoursel' an' tell her not to be so smart. Such thing've been done before. No wolf refuses a juicy leg, even though it comes from a holy Madonna.

Eve. But it can't be that Mary does these things. How could she undress in broad daylight?

Andrew. I'd expect anything from your lunatic'.

Eve. Don't be the first to throw stones. Other fathers would praise God for such children, an' he---

(Reverend Edmond Clement and Mrs. Clement stop in passing and greet them heartily). Good-evening, good-evening.

Rev. How is it that we have not seen you at mass today. We had a fine congregation.

Andrew. Oh, just so. We felt more like restin' up a bit.

Fate. Well, and Mary - has she been out with a young man yet? Or is she in no hurry?

Rev. A fine dear child. You must tell her that I have already found the old text of the Apocryphal Testament. It has wonderfully ~~[illegible]~~ beautiful commentaries - a real treasure-house. That girl has been reading all my books.

Fate. There she has the better of me. If I ever take down a volume, as soon as I've read a few pages, it seems to me that I must have read it before somewhere. Queer, isn't it? But all sacred books are alike to me.

Rev. That, my dear Fate, depends on how one reads them. For one who cares only for the story of Christ, then one book on Christ will suffice. But to him who would rise to the Spirit of Christ, every book is a treasure. Ha-ha'. Well, I think we had better take leave.

Felix. Maybe ye've got some news from the war - eh?

Rev. No. There is as yet no mention of peace. It would not be a bad thing for America to lend her power for peace. Unfortuneately, however, the Germans are a stubborn lot. They demand, it seems, the full pound of flesh.

Felix. And they will get it, too'. They know their business, those Huns.

Rev. As long as it does not touch us.

Andrew. Us? What have they got against us? We don't want war, they won't attack us for no reason,

Rev. The way things are, however, it seems quite possible that America shall have to step in. Naturally, our president is averting this move as far as possible, but in war you never can tell. It is bound up with-

Fäte. Pray, Edmond, let that be. I shudder to think of it. Tell them rather of the child that spoke as soon as it was born.

Felix. What, something new about a child?

Rev. Yes. It was reported in the newspaper, yesterday, that in Czecho-Slovakia, on the Austrian border, a child was born with wings and soon began to speak.

Louise. Really? Can you imagine'.

Rev. The paper has it that the child called out: 'On the fifteenth of August of this year the war shall cease' - and an hour later the child was dead.

Andrew. That's a sign no child was born with wings and no child spoke.

Eve. You wouldn't believe anything'.

Andrew. There's nothing to believe. What do you say, Reverend?

Rev. How can one know, Andrew? I was not present, therefore, I can say nothing. It is a report from a newspaper; he who wishes, believes, and he who will not, does not. Well, good-night to you all.

Fate. Good-night. Send Mary over for the book. My Edmond never stops praising her, ha-ha'. Good-night.

Rev. Good-night. (Both leave).

Alma. (calling from afar). Hey, mother, I'm hungry. (she runs up). Come on, Ma, Judah is hungry too.

Felix. That's just a habit of his. As soon as he lays eyes on a girl, he at once gets very hungry.

Louise. He's no more hungry than I'm sleepy. He's packed himself full a little while ago, the swine. He sent ye out on purpose. Come, he must want to steal a kiss from the poor girl.

Alma. Ha-ha'. I don't mind. Her brother sends her out for apple-pie when I come. So It's up to me now to return the favor, ha-ha-ha'.

Louise. Stop talking that way, do you hear?

David. (Comes up carrying a bundle on his shoulders, the collar of his white shirt unbuttoned, his hair unkempt and parted in the centre). Good-evening. Is there anything I can sell you?

Alma. (looks at him coquettishly). What'll ye sell for nothing?

David. Anything you can get for nothing.

Alma. Then show it to me'.

David. (thumbs his nose at her, all laugh).

Alma Keep that for yourself, you monkey'.

David. Ha-ha'. Anything more, sweet sister, will have to be paid for.

Alma. With money I can buy at the merchant's. (Coquettishly). Bye-bye'. (Goes quickly).

Andrew. Let's see what you have there. Maybe we'll buy something?

David. (Puts down the bundle, recovers his breath, then gets down on his knees and opens the pack). Look them over and see what you need.

Felix. (Looking over some things in the pack). Your hair makes ya look like a real anarchist.

Louise. I'd swear the painting of God's son resembles him.

Felix. Ha-ha'. Everyman with a long nose makes my wife think of the Christ'.

Andrew. His nose may be a nose, but the forehead really does look much like the other.

David. (sinking to the steps). Well, I forgive you for my resemblance to Jesus, but that I am an anarchist - that you have almost guessed, ha-ha'.

All (astounded). Not really'. Not an anarchist'.

David. Why, yes. But why are you so surprised?

Andrew. Why, they tell such terrible stories about them devils, ye can scarce believe they look anywheres near human.

David. Yes, yes - if you believe the stories they tell about them. But should you look deep into their eyes, you would see the agony of the world, and should you look closer at their faces, you would see the face of the holy Jesus. Yes'. More than once have I thought about our appearance. I have wandered over the world and have seen many races and peoples, but rarely have I seen among these one who bore a human face.

Felix. Ha- it matters what ye consider human. Not everybody is beautiful.

David. One doesn't have to be beautiful the way you mean it. But he must not lose the image of God.

Andrew. The image of God? They say ye don't believe in any God. How is it ye can speak of his image?

David. For I believe that each man is in himself a god, and the godly ~~mui~~must shine forth from the human. We must rebuild ourselves and mould ourselves to pave the way for salvation.

Andrew. How do you like that - eh? It sounds pretty. A socialist, a peddler, yet he talks of salvation. How would ye like to make a speech in our temple? We are so out of touch with the world. Ye'd Revive us a bit with new words. It's too bad our Reverend's just left. I guess he'd allow it.

David. The fact is, however that I don't preach in any church. Sitting together, as we are now, we may exchange a few words, sometimes we understand one another, and sometimes not.

Felix. What is there that can't be understood. What you say sounds quite clear.

David. That's just it. People love to be spoken to in a hidden way, so they might derive from it something for their own benefit.

Eve. It is everywhere like this?

David. Everywhere.

Andrew. Then what good do ye get by wanderin'? Will ye never settle down in one place?

David. Perhaps, my children.

Louise. Are you married?

David. As yet, no.

Felix. How can a man get along without a woman?

David. And what am I to do if there are none?

Felix. None? The world has women enough'.

David. There are enough women. But among all women She is hard to find.

Eve. Maybe that's why ye wander about?

David. That may be. None of us know what mysterious power drives us to do things that are beyond our knowledge.

(Thinks a while). Who knows? Perhaps it is She who drags me about?

Andrew. And so ye make a livin' by peddlin'.

David. What else can a wanderer take up?

Andrew. (Potters around some more). Well, let's see what you sell. (They all choose things, ask prices, pay and lazily stretch their limbs stiffened with too much sitting).

Louise. I guess this time~~x~~ we'd better get a bite to eat. Good night.

Felix. (Stretching himself lazily). Say, maybe you too've read about the child with wings. Do ye think it's true?

David. Whether true or not, the people have the right to create legends for themselves. It's natural that in time of war mankind should dream of peace. You know how the saying goes. 'The hungry man dreams of bread'.

Felix. Right, right, my son'. Good-night. (Is leaving with Louise, then stops suddenly). Wait a while, now, what have ye got to say about the after-life? Do ye think there is any such thing?

David. Who knows? By now it is not merely a religious promise, this Eternal Life. Science claims that our whole existence is the endless transformation of one immense life. That's the way it always is. First, a dreamer comes along and with his sickly, religious spirit catches up some dream out of the infinite universe. Then the scientist enters and creates order. The same happened with the fantastic tales of Jules Verne about submarines and air-planes, and so it is with the religious vision of eternal life. And what have we to lose if it is so? Is not man without the spiritual transformation mere mud? And if only mud, why not ~~xx~~ cleave to the large earth to renew ourselves and perhaps humanize? Ha-ha-ha'. We'll have to admit, you know, that the mass of earth makes better soil than the solitary dust-speck. Just consider what may spring into life on our body - of our sweat and fat.

k Lice, worms and at best - a flea. But take the earth. What marvellous plants are born out of its sweat'. You see, it isn't so sad after all, this return to the Earth - ha? On the contrary, it is easy to understand the joy - of returning home - ha-ha-ha'.

Felix. By heck, he's a clever one. I'll be hanged if I'd refuse to take you for a son-in-law, ha-ha'. Good night'. (Goes out with Louise).

Eve. If you pass here tomorrow, stop off. Perhaps Mary, my daughter, will buy something?

David. Thank you.

Andrew. Well, good-night. (Goes with Eve into the house. The sun is entirely hidden behind~~xx~~ the mountain. A barely discernible reddish streak remains hanging in that region).

David. (On his knees, makes his pack to rights, then puts his profits into the breast- pocket of his jacket, which he carries on his arm, hoists the pack to his shoulder and prepares to leave).

Mary. (comes toward him stops in wonderment, looks a long time into his face, then falls on her knees and crosses herself a few times).

David. (Lifts her, looking the while into her eyes). Mary - so you are Mary - why do you kneel, beautiful girl? If to kneel, then ought I rather kneel to you? It is long, long, since I have met in my wanderings so luminous a face.

Mary. I new you would come. I prayed and hoped.

David. Where are you coming from, Mary?

Mary. From the woods. Did you not hear my voice calling you? Every day I call to you. Now you will take me? Yes, you will take me now? Come away with me - to the woods.

David. (Pensively). It may be I have heard you calling. Only I could not find the way to you. A little while ago I spoke of you to these people, then you rose before me like a dream. Yes, we will go -

Mary. (Takes his hand. They both leave).

Judah. (Who has come some time before, looks after them suspiciously).

Curtain falls.

Act II., Scene 1.

(In Rev. Edmond Clement's reception-room, nine months later. Rev. Edmond Clement and Fate are quarreling.)

Rev. I simply cannot understand how this idiotic idea ever got hold of you'.

Fate. Why, of course, you've got to be very clever to understand such things. At every opportunity, you never fail to caress her, as if she were nothing but a little girl.

Rev. Well, what else is she - a woman? Perhaps you're worried about the fact that she once came to us for a book?

Fate. To us'. A lot she had to do with me. Did she ever say more than 'Good-morning' to anybody?

Rev. Why don't you try to talk to her sometimes?

Fate. As if she came here to talk'. She comes to be patted.

Rev. (Angrily). Fate, I tell you that this is becoming unbearable. It is indeed a curse when a woman doesn't know the difference between a fatherly caress and a sinful caress - a curse, I tell you.

Fate. Yes, to be sure, a fatherly caress'. And after every caress you might explain it to the world. People have eyes. And why shouldn't people have suspicions when a girl just refuses to get married?

Rev. But you know she hasn't been coming here the last three months.

Fate. That's just why it doesn't seem right. You tell me why she suddenly stopped coming if there was no danger in coming here.

Rev. (More angry). She hasn't even been coming to church of late.

Fate. Sure enough'. When you do something wrong, you are too ashamed to look people in the eyes.

Rev. Listen to me, Fate'. I think you have gone too far. ~~Thinking up~~ Inventing accusations about innocent people is unbecoming even to a wretch ~~[illegible]~~ ~~viper~~ like yourself. Do you understand what I am saying? Well, then - (The door-bell rings. Both become silent).

Matthew Norman. (Comes in, lively). Hello, Reverend. You too Fate. I want you both to hear what I have to say. I'd like to ask your advice about my expedition with the student body to San Francisco. How many days' food have we got to prepare?

Rev. I don't know. That depends on the [illegible] course you will follow.

Matthew. I'm not certain of that myself, but I imagine we'll cut straight from here across to Nevada, then to Madero without halting. From there we travel to Oakland and from Oakland to San Francisco. Well, what do you think?

Fate. You and your ideas'. The boys must love you for your adventures with them. I'm rather jealous.

Matthew. Well, sister, pack up then and come along'. You still have enough time to get ready. We're not starting before the fifth of June, after school closes.

Fate. Listen to that. It is still the beginning of May and he's already fussing about his expedition.

Matthew. Don't forget we've got our plans to figure out. Hiking to San Francisco is no child's play.

Rex. You really intend to make the whole journey on foot?

Matthew. Why, certainly. Otherwise, where's the fun?

Rev. It is quite a long stretch. Taking so many young children, you will have to be thoroughly prepared, and it would do no harm to have a car follow you.

Matthew. Leave it to me. We'll have a jolly good time, don't fear. And there is much to be seen in San Francisco. It will mean much to the children even to visit the museums alone. What have they here? And what do they know?

Rev. It would not be such a very bad idea to liven up the whole community.

Matthew. Try and do it. Why, they're all paupers. No matter where you turn you need money, and money again. If we could only get a little fund together, I'd surely accomplish something with it. But try and do anything when you have pauper farmers to deal with (The door bell rings.)

Fate. Who can it be? (She opens the door). Welcome, the best of guests'. Come right in. (Dexter and Patrick enter greeting everyone with "Good-afternoon, good-afternoon").

Dexter. I'd bet the Reverend has no idea why we have come.

Rev. How am I to guess?

Dexter. It makes us feel queer to tell it. But there was no way out of it. So we have come for your advice, Reverend. It looks quite serious to us.

Patrick. So it does.

Rev. What are you talking about?

Patrick. I believe you know farmer - what's his name, Andrew, who lives near Felix; the one with the red beard.

Rev. Yes, why?

Patrick. And you must know his daughter - Mary is her name.

Rev. What about it?

Patrick. Well, she has just given birth.

Fate. (Frightened). What do you mean? What do you mean?

Dexter. Just what he says'.

Rev. (shaken). Well, what can I do about it? What do you want with me?

Dexter. We have come to hold a consultation. We have already sent some police down to the place, and they can't drive them away. All the people of the neighborhood have gathered and surrounded the whole farm. And mobs of people are coming from all sides. Something might happen. Someone has spread a rumor that the girl Mary has given birth to Messiah.

Rev. What'. What is this? Are you inventing stories?

Dexter. This is no story. We've tried, by good means and bad, to scatter them. But it's no use. It looks as if a real miracle has happened there.

Rev. What are you chattering about? What is it all about?

Matthew. A fine joke, upon my word, ha-ha-ha'. (A knock is heard).

Rev. Come in'

Walter Simpson (enters, a young man of about thirty, with a very haughty stubborn face. He speaks with authority). Good-day. ~~Whyx~~ why this confab? It is about the noise going on over there at Andrews - eh?

Rev. What else? Is it as serious as all that?

Patrick. What do you mean? You don't think we~~x~~ invented it out of our own heads'. We reckoned that if you'd go down there yourself, you might put some sense into them.

Walter S. What's happened over there - a miracle?

Patrick. Miracle is no word for it. I myself am not too pious. But I ~~have~~ aint never seen the likes of this before.

Dexter. Could it possibly be the real thing? Ha-Ha'. Isn't there a forecast in the Holy Scriptures about such a thing?

Rev. A forecast? You mean that - Oh, what has gotten into you? you Don't believe that -

Matthew. Wait a while, Ha- ha- ha'. Why not really look it up in the Holy Scriptures, ha- ha- ha'.

Walter S. One moment now, Matthew, stop laughing. I have an inspiration. (He looks mistrustfully at Fate). Would not ~~rather~~ Mrs. Clement rather leave us to ourselves for a few minutes? - Please.

Fate. (Looks at her husband a while, then goes off wiping her eyes).

Walter S. My idea is a good one, but it must remain a secret between us, do you understand? This story about a Messiah strikes me. I think a good business can be made out of it. (He looks into the eyes of each on significantly). Now listen to me. Our town is a poor one, poorer than all the towns round about, quite the most primitive. And yet it may become the richest. Of course, it must be understood here and now that I speak not for my own benefit alone, but for the benefit of our whole community. Our region contains large stretches of fertile soil. No question. But what have we gotten from it? Nothing, simply nothing'. If the land, however, rose a little in price, you would be able to build a great Metropolis. How, then, does land become valuable? When the inhabitants increase. Right now you have the best opportunity you ever had for boosting the ground. How? Very simply. We've got to trumpet even further and louder this rumor about a Messiah. Then you will see how from all the corners of the earth the curious will flock. A few new hotels will immediately spring up. People must eat. Stores will grow and so on, and so on. Ha-ha'. What do you say to it now?

Dexter. Hm - It sounds good enough to me.

Rev. To tell the truth, the thought occurred to me before you even mentioned it. For such an undertaking we would have to have a more decent church, you know - newcomers would certainly flock to it - rich people, I don't doubt -

Walter S. You don't have to worry about that. We will erect a temple which shall be famous thoughout the world. And now, I think, you ought to be getting down to the place in the nick of time. Do you think we ought to come along too?

Rev. I don't think it will do any harm - eh? What do you say, Matthew?

Matthew. Hm- I say that you are a bunch of - oh, well, go on, go right on, ha-ha'. - perhaps some truth will come out of it after all. Ha-, who knows whether this whole world of ours was not created out of some god's idiotic inspiration?

Rev. (sharply). Matthew'.

Matthew (sarcastically). All right'.

Curtain falls.

Act II. ,Scene 2.

(Before the house of Andrew. Same as Act I., a few hours later. A large multitude besieges the place and there is a tumult near and far. Various people run in and out of the door and everyone who comes out is drowned in questions, especially if there is a suspicion that he is a relative).

Louise. (comes out, speaks to a group that has stopped). I tell ye the truth, I never seen the likes of it. The child shines like the sun and the mother looks like an angel.

Barbara (runs out panting). I can't understand and I can't see how'. Her body gives off perfumes that spread all over the house.

One woman. Sure enough. Don't we even smell it out here. (To another). Don't ye get the smell? Ye'd have to cotton up your nose not to get so sweet a one.

Second woman. (draws a breath, nods her head in assent). That's right, m-m-m- (And gradually everyone admits 'there never was so sweet a smell in all my life').

Barbara. What are you so surprised. Didn't old Daniel know it all along. Before he died he called over Mrs. Daniel on purpose and told her a secret: That when he first saw the girl undress in the sun and bow and sing to the Father in Heaven, he thought at first she was a wanton. (Erotically.) But when he saw a whole pack of wolves run around her without touching her he understood right off that she was meeting God. It can't be seen otherwise. For who, I swear, would take a chance of going alone to the woods - with a bare behind in the bargain, God forgive me for saying so. Take me, I'm at least a week older than her, yet I never set foot in the wood since the happening with the wolf. Which flesh and blood will take a chance fighting wolves with bare hands? And if she wasn't afraid and went, then it's a sign that He called her. Because when no one calls, no one goes, and if ye go, ye are called.

Alma. (who has come up and heard the monologue, suddenly bursts into laughter).

Barbara. Sh-sh'. Keep still, you slut. How can you think of laughing now?

Alma. She never looked very cunning, quiet Mary, to make fools of you all. I never believed much in her pious make-believe. But I never thought she'd be smart enough for anything like this.

Barbara. Ye can say that again, that ye didn't know. And ye never will know. Ye've got to be as pure a soul as Mary to go so far.

Alma. Ha-ha-ha-'. You ask my Judah how far she went. She didn't imagine, the fool, that Judah saw everything. Let herself be taken by a peddler'. If she wanted a bastard, why didn't she go to a rich man rather than a beggar.

Barbara. (erotically). Then it's a surprise to me ye haven't a few bastards yourself at your age. Look at the way ye go. What a dress ye've put on, so's anyone would see your naked skin'. Why don't ye throw it off and be rid of it?

Alma. Ha-ha-ha'. What a yap she's opened, the old witch'. Your eyes are falling out. You grudge me because I'm young. You're a holy terror. At my age, you went around for days in your night-shirt, and what you did, my great grandmother can still tell you. Yes, yes'.

Barbara. What are ye comparin? (depressed, through tears to the bystanders). What do ye say to this ~~Why don't ye do something about it~~? No difference if ye undress before Gor or before sinful people'. God forgive me for saying so.

Alma. (laughs loud).

Judah (comes in sadly, tries to peer in through the window)

Alma. Here's Judah himself. These nuts won't believe. Tell 'em Judah.

Judah. (impatient). Oh, let me alone '.

Alma. Say there, maybe yo've been fibbing me. Or are you beginning to believe that story yourself. Maybe you're coming back to your old religion, ha-ha'.

Judah (sadly). Now, let me alone.

Barbara. Ye wouldn't swear anybody'd believe him even if he spoke. Ye think everybody doesn't know he was trying to hitch up with her and she wouldn't even look twice at him. The good-for-nothing, he couldn't think up anything better to catch.

Judah (suddenly becomes ferocious and makes for Barbara). Shut your mouth, you old hag. You and that bastard can break your necks, but leave me out of it. (Bystanders surround him).

First. Beat it from here'.

Second. Get your hide out o' the way'.

Third. We'll break your head for you'.

Fourth. The liar - let's stone him'.

Fifth. That's too easy for him'.

(Rev. Edmond Clement, Walter Simpson, Dexter and Patrick come up).

Rev. What's the trouble here? Instead of celebrating, you fight. People ought to dance in the streets for joy at the great news and here you are, quarreling.

Barbara (in tears). God himself sent you here, noble Reverend. It's not enough that he doesn't believe, but he must invent a story about the girl - that she's a low woman. The world is dying for a little joy, and now that we've hardly lived to seeit, he must come and spoil it.

Rev. Satan always has his ways. But the word of God is stronger. He who believes is saved.

One of the mob. Then you mean maybe it might be true?

Rev. (salesman-fashion). No "might" about it; It is certain we should have expected this thing to happen. For never before has there been so striking a symbol as this which points to our own age. Is it not plainly written in the Gospels, that the sign of the Resurrection will be the rising of nation against nation and a mighty war which will embrace the entire world? Kingdoms shall fall, earthquakes shall shatter the earth, starvation and plague ravage and hate and terror shall make one man rise up against his brother. And then the Savior will appear, and in place of fear and terror joy will hold sway, and in place of hate, love. And it shall be in the fullness of the years; a lion shall lie down with a lamb, and a human child shall lead them.

Judah. (who had listened to the sermon, moves closer and speaks wonderingly and shyly). But - I saw it with my own eyes, Reverend Mx. Mr. Clement.

Rev. What was it you saw?

Judah. I came up just as she and the peddler who just got here were goin' away to the wood.

Rev. And how can you be certain of what you saw? And if it appeared to you in the shape of a peddler, you still are sure you saw rightly? What great things have you accomplished in your life that you should be worthy of beholding Him.

Judah. Ye mean to say the Savior will come disguised.

Rev. Nay, He will not come, for He is already here. And you neither saw nor recognized Him. Alas, alas Judah, you should be overjoyed to have been worthy of seeing even his shadow.

Judah. It is so ... I am only a poor sinner. How could I know any better? To tell the truth, I did wonder: if he is only a peddler, why didn't we see more of him? And again I thought, maybe - who knows, maybe the town is too small and he can't make business. I'd like to go in to her, take one look - and ask her to forgive me.

Rev. You must not distrub her now. I shall go in myself. I shall pray for you.

Judah (fawningly). Thanks, thanks. And ask the child too, to forgive me.

Rev. What does she call him?

Barbara. She calls him Messiah, the same as in the Holy Bible, the "Son of God".

Rev. Splendid, splendid'. (Goes into the house).

Judah. I don't know why, people, but I think a miracle has happened. My eyes are opened and I feel so light, - Oh, it is so good'.

All. It is so good——

Let us sing praise to God.

Let us all sing.

(They begin to sing a hymn, falling to their knees).

David (appears unnoticed by the mob. He softly walks to the little window and gazes within yearningly, then turns with a bright smile, looks a while at the ecstatically chanting crowd, and disappears).

Curtain falls.

Act III., Scene 1.

(On a mountain. Deep in the background, a splendid temple. It is the end of the month of May. The sun, in all its glory, blazes down on the congregation offering up their prayer between heaven and earth.

Seek no more alone to gather
Riches, food or cloth to wear;
Mother Earth will brim the cup
In plentitude for every heir.
Let us sing through life together
Bearing banners peace-engraven,
And let each fashion for another
A ~~golden~~ crown of love to bear.

(Messiah is seated in their midst. He is twenty years old and resembles his father David. But the expression on his face is softer, more tender. About him are seated family and followers, Mary, her parents, Judah, his parents, Henry and George. Alma is seated at his feet. And about him a large gathering is held spell-bound by the words of their leader.

Barbara (looks dumbly into each face with a jealousy, ~~which~~ for, they understand, ~~but which~~ what she does not. Nervous and tense, she is constantly shifting her position).

Messiah. (speaks in a quiet but distinct lyrical tenor). They have raised a temple where people shall praise God. I lead you under the open sky because I know that you cannot praise God in your heart when you have never heard the voice of God. In his name they shackled your body and soul in chains. In my name they have raised a magnificent temple. God has no need for you in chains and I have no need for you in temples. They asked neither Him nor me. For Him is too old. And I am too young.

When people began to build temples in my name, I, Messiah, still lay in my cradle. More than "Ma" I could not say. Yet, had they only asked me - had they only asked me, I would have cried out: "No, no!." (Pause). I have no need for temples.

Mary. Then how, my son, can we know God?

Messiah. In one's self.

Judah. By what?

Messiah. By having thrust from you the fear of death.

Judah. Must not man be afraid to die?

Messiah. No. Each must dedicate himself. The power of devoting one's life to a great ideal is thepassing over into a new life. Terror will fall away. For the passing from one life into another is like sleeping through a night of sweet dreams. No one but man himself has the right to decide the time of his deliverance, for no one can decide the sublime transition from the static to the virtual moment of joy. Joy drives away terror, and where there isx no terror there can be no death.

Henry. If there is no death, then is life eternal?

Messiah. Life is eternal.

For all thing live,
And all that lives is clothed in a body.
And in every body there is a soul.
Take the flower, the grass, the plants and herbs:
Every plant bears different hues and marks.
Each one in itself bears the seal of a certain climate.
And like man himself, they wear traces of garments to protect them at times against the wind, the sun, from too much rain and from cold.
In certain regions plants are covered with moss,
In others they are as smooth as mirrors.

Some petals are soft and round, while others are stiff and
sharp as knife-blades.
Some are set close to earth, while others lift their heads
above everything.
And just as man's body isfilled with arteries,
So are plants interwoven with tiny threads in all direction ~~and~~
and in the most miraculous order,
so that nourishment might be borne to every portion of the plant.
Who commands them to do so?
Life'.
What is Life?
Spirit'.
What is Spirit?
Sensitivity.'
Why do we sense?
To uphold existence.
Why do we exist?
To create'.
Why do we create?
To continue ourselves.
Because Life is eternal.
There is no death.
Even when certain limbs are cut away from the stems.
All these shoots do not perish when they are cut away.
They have only ceased to exist as plants and are transformed
into a new life ~~through the fact that~~ by way of man and other creatures
who receive nourishment ~~through~~ from them. If all these plants did not
retain life after they had been cut away from the stem, we
could never support our existence through them, and if it is
true that our bodies are nourished by them, then it is a sign

that they contain life. Man also, when he is cut away from his stem, does not remain and inert element.
He merely returns to another life, to a larger life, to an eternal life, which is God.

George. Then how is it that we can protest against those who wish to destroy us through hard labor and suppression? And if our defense is weak, we bear in our ~~breasts~~ hearts deep, bitter hatred toward them.

Messiah. Because life has no love for chains. Man is in the process of reconstruction. He revolts against those that block his path. For great things never can grow out of forced labor. And each work must be a labor of love. And each thing done out of love is creation. And creation is life. And life is God.

George. Shall we ever free ourselves from today's oppression, under which we suffer?

Messiah. Yes. We are now living through a grave period, my brothers and sisters, an age of upheavals, an age of storm and destruction. Therefore, our spirits are restless. We are still vagabond natures, for our soul seeks deliverance. But this, too, is one of the roads leading to the bright dawn. Our unrest drives us from place to place. We are the wind which is fated to bear the seeds of the mighty word, that must be sown and planted over the whole earth. Now is the time my brothers and sisters, to begin the great journey over the earth, till our hand shall clasp the hand of our brethern across the sea: Our brethern who once called themselves Slavs~~,~~ and have now become the true Christians, the first followers who have ceased to be ~~sectional~~ a sect. Let us mix our blood with theirs and march toward the goal of peace. And we shall have no need of judges or of armies.

Barbara. Forgive me a thousand times, But I don't see any sense in it. How will you manage without judges and armies? Suppose' a thief comes

Several (laugh).

Barbara (offended). What is there to laugh about? I don't think I'm talkin' nonsense.

Alma. It is more than nonsense, Barbara. What you say is true of an old and dying world that cannot understand the new life of the Future.

Barbara. Look whose preachin'! What a life, if she has to teach me! How long since you used to suck your finger - ha? Who doesn't remember the way ye scorned when he was born. And now ye're puttin' on airs and tryin' to tell me I talk nonsense.

Alma. Since then twenty years have passed. It is true that those who walk about blindfold do not become wiser or change their habits even if they live to be a hundred. I, however, have had my eyes opened. I see today and I look forward to the bright dawn. Do you understand, Barbara?

Barbara. Honest, I don't know what you're talkin' about here. I wasn't born yesterday, I guess, and many's the sermon I've heard in church, and I should say I certainly did understand what was being spoke about there!

George. I'm afraid, Barbara, that you are wasting your time here. You would serve God better by sitting at home.

Barbara. It's too much for my head. These days everything's up-side-down. Once upon a time, they listened respectfullly to us old folks and wanted to learn from an older person. Today ye thank us for sitting at home. What can I do about it? Well, who knows, maybe you're right after all? (she sighs and steals away).

Messiah. (pensively). Without judges, without armies — how hard it is for the old world to discard these~~,~~ how hard—

Andrew. Time flies and youth grows into age.

George. What can you mean, Andrew?

Andrew. I mean that more than one generation has grown gray in the hope that salvation would come. But nothing everx changed.

Alma. (rises and begins, somewhat shaken). And just because, ~~my brothers and sisters~~, those generations waited and hoped, they grow old waiting, my brothers and sisters. We shall not wait. We are learning to greet the new dawn. Therefore we shall grow younger again and shall yet see our own image in the sun. ~~From~~ now ~~on~~ we must begin, now that in all the lands of the globe there is a surplus of all goods. Even those countries which were once markets for the x rich industrial nations have their own surplus of products due to the machinery that Capital has installed. The standard of living is sinking lower and lower because of the malignant competition of individuals who seek to capture everything and more for themselves. And when the standard of living is lowered, the consumption of goods decreases, production results in an even larger surplus and new millions are thrown out of work. ~~Demm~~ Demand decreases and so on without end. These are truths which even Capital dares not deny. The terrific number of unemployed in the whole world are the most significant of witnesses and the mightiest factor. And deliverance can only come when there ~~there~~ is division of labor, when all the people of the earth will work reasonable hours, every one equally and no more than what society can utilize. And the rest of the day need not be drowned in worry and heart-ache, but shall pass in joy and song, in joy - and song. The time is almost here, my brothers and sisters - a new age is coming to greet us'.

Judah (jumps up, inspired). How true'. How true'. If you would only listen to the words of Capital at its conferences, you would hear them come to the same conclusion. They themselves point out that things are now very bad. They blame one another for crimes in which they are all equally guilty. They see the mote in another's eye, but not the beam in their own. Each of them is afraid to admit that they, the exponents themselves, are guilty in that chaos through which the world is now passing, and although they feel that they cannot prevent, with all their dark and hidden deeds, the emancipation of mankind, they mean nevertheless to suppress with cruellest atrocity those that shall rise in the hope of final deliverance.

The People. Why - Why?

Messiah. Because people are afraid of the truth, people are afraid, my brethren. If man were not afraid of the new word, then the Kingdom of Heaven would long ago have come on earth.

(A thin drizzle had begun to fall in the meantime, in the midst of the sun's splendor. All remain motionless in profound attention. It appears as if golden threads weave and intertwine in a skein upward and down, as if binding together heaven and earth. All sit quietly).

Messiah (with deep feeling and lucid joy).

How beautiful, how rarely beautiful —
Rain and sun,
Fire and water,
The two extremest elements of life,
Have made ~~their~~ peace
In a heavenly harmony.

Curtain Falls.

Act III., scene 2.

(At Mr. Walter Simpson's, in a splendid guest-chamber, the same evening. Mr. Walter Simpson, Matthew Norman, Rev. Edmond Clement, Dexter and Patrick are holding a consultation. They all appear to be in a depressed state).

Walter S. (walks up and down in great anger, stops suddenly and cries) We have grown and spread. I don't deny it - but then, what of it? Will this stripling come along and destroy us? Not on your life'. If he wants Socialism, let him and his disciples go to the Soviets. Praised be God, we can live in the most beautiful hotels and mansions without Socialism.

Matthew. You forget, however, Mr. Simpson, that we have grown in the last twenty years more quickly than in all the years before. And you know quite well in whose name we have built all these rich hotels and mansions in our neighborhood.

Walter S. We proposed that he set his own price. What does he want, the fool - Socialism? Not here'.

Rev. Well, I guess the only way is to expose his real identity to the world.

Walter S. And as quickly as possible. Ha-ha'. Now it pays us to let the rabble know that he is only the son of a peddler.

Dexter. Too deeply has he gone into the heart of our farmers. His Communistic ideas have struck into the very stomach of our poor. He is surrounded by them as by an iron wall. Some of our well-to-do citizens have already dedicated their property to them. The only ones who disbelieve in him are members of the Klan. But you never can tell. If we don't stop it in time, it may be too late.

Rev. There is still nothing to be afraid of. Only, we must waste no xxx time in setting Judah to work. Let him but tell what he waw with his own eyes and the whole conception of a Messiah will be smashed. Our own people have no love for peddlers. Do you understand?

Walter S. (diabolically). And you wouldn't blame them would you?

Patrick. But Judah refuses to speak. We have argued with him time and again and even threatened him, but he remains immovable.

Walter S. He will be stubborn till he sees this package. (He points to a packet of money). These bills are a sobering influence. They have already sobered one Judah. Send him a delegation with full pockets and he will become wiser.

Patrick. I have sent out half a dozen policemenk to have him brought in. They'll bring him by fair means or foul.

Matthew (who has been standing thoughtully, speaks up). I believe, my friends, that foul means can do no good in this case. What will happen even if you succeed in bribing Judah and spreading a rumor that He is the son of a peddler? Where is the crime in it? You can't expect any of our citizens to condemn a person who never has committed any crime, except that of having a rather long nose and a pair of clever eyes.

Walter S. So? He has committed no crime? Who gave the suggestion to buy cooperative trucks and boycott the railroad? And who incited honest citizens to refuse to pay government taxes? Do you consider these crimes or no, Mr. Matthew Norman?

Matthew. We have no law to forbid our citizens the freedom of speech.

Walter S. Even against the government?

Matthew. Even against the government.

Walter S. Ha-ha! None, you say? And what do you suppose is the purpose of our anti-syndicalist law?

Matthew. If you wish to hunt up a law which was promulgated at a time when mankind wallowed in its blood, then, gentleman, do so without me.

Walter S. For my part, you don't have to bring the law into the case. They can hang him even without a trial'.

Matthew (shuddering). Then say plainly, Mr. Simpson, that you want a lynching party on an innocent boy. Then you won't have to give any excuses. But don't go looking for any laws, my friend. Don't get us into a mess'.

Walter S. Us? Who are you, Mr. Matthew Norman? In whose name do you speak?

Matthew. In the name of the American freedom'. In the name of humanity'.

Walter S. You see, I have always said ~~cried~~ that you can't depend on these professors. These cranks and their liberalism will yet bring us to destruction. I think we had better get rid of them first.

Matthew. But you forget, Mr. Simpson, that although you are town official, there will be no need to use against you an anti-syndicalist law which was created in a time of blood-hysteria. We will get rid of you on our own Constitutional Law.

Walter S. And what charge, professor, are you going to bring against me?

Matthew. The charge that through criminal manipulation of the bank and the budget, you have robbed hundreds and thousands of citizens of their last bloody earnings and that now, when they have no work, they are being thrown out of their homes. This is the charge, Mr. Simpson, which cannot be washed clean even by the thousands you give away to charity and religious institutions.

Rev. To tell the truth, it is an unpleasant piece of work. But when the circumstances are such, you cannot help it. He explits the confidence of the people and you can never say where he might ~~kmx~~ lead them. I swear it would make little differenceto me that they believed so utterly in him, if he had remained as naive as he was. The whole trouble is, however, that he has become a rabid heretic: He has turned the whole Bible into a Testament of Communism.

Matthew. There indeed is where the whole trouble lies, that you exponents of Christianity would have the Christian ideal embalmed in its infancy. You who pretend to be true Christians have made a farce of Christianity. You remember the hoax you perpetrated in 1916, barely twenty years ago, when the girl Mary gave birth to a boy? It is indeed symbolic. It is barely twenty hundred years that Christ was born. Unfortunately for you, the great naive idea has matured, and when a true apostle arises, you label him a tempter with many names. You are terror-stricken when the new Messiah reads Socialism into the words of Christ. What else, kind sirs, is Socialism, if not the child of Christianity? Read the Gospels with intelligence and you will hear the bitterest radical indictment against yourself. I once listened to a sermon of his which he delivered before his followers. And he explained himself. He said, "When they were raising temples for my sake, I was still a child in arms. No more than "MA" I could ~~not~~ say. And yet if they had only asked me, I would have cried out, No'. I want no temples, I want no temples'." Upon hearing these words, I thought to myself; Could this be the true Christ speaking? For would not Jesus himself, who once preached that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, would not this very Christ, if he should awaken and behold the rich temples built for his sake and the horrible lies with which you have bespattered his ideal, cry out as this youth: Nay, Nay'. I wished not this'

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Walter S. Now it is clear. Now I know where we stand. We will come to no agreement this meeting.

Matthew. Nor at any other, except in my absence.

Walter S. Of that you may be sure.

Matthew. That is for a jury to decide. (Goes quickly).

Walter S. (savagely). And that is the best he can do for us, the bastard'.

Rev. You are unjst, Mr. Simpson. My mother-in-law was a pious woman.

Walter S. (pounds on the table). Now is not the time for sentiment, Reverend. You will do as I say'.

Dexter. I think--

Walter S. You think nothing'. Wait till I tell you something'. Matthew Norman has left to organize a jury, do you understand? He wants to prepare public opinion. And we must anticipate him. He will bring him to no trial'.

Patrick. It is still - not clear to me.

Walter S. You will - (The door-bell rings, the door opens and Judah is led in by the police. For a moment there is nok sound).

Rev. (tenderly). Sit, sit, brother Judah.

Judah (looks at him sarcastically, coldly, bitterly).

Walter S. Well, sit down now that you have come.

Judah. I did not come. I was brought here by force.

Rev. Why then did you lead honest citizens into so much temptation? Honest men need not be ashamed to appear among their brothers.

Judah. Brothers'. Wolves, you mean'.

Rev. If you are angry how can anyone speak to you?

Judah. Too long have we been listening to you'.

Dexter. And what have you lost by it? Except that now this maniac has come and is turning your head. Whereas you yourself can bear witness and pull the people out of this mess. As an honest citizen, it is your duty to reveal that he is the son of a peddler and not a Messiah.

Judah. In our age we consider ourselves worthy that the sons of a peddler shall emancipate us. For many thousands of years we waited for him to come on his white steed and who knows how many tens of thousands would have passed if the poor peddler had not appeared.

Walter S. What do you get by arguing? We did not invite you here to any discussion. Another like you has just run off scalded in his own heat. You, however, can go home much - cooler, if you will only act sensible. Now listen carefully and we'll talk business. You know very well that you will gain little through your Savior. We, however, pay in cold cash. (He takes out the packet of money). Here are twenty-thousand. Well, what do you say?

Judah (looks at him acutely). Hm. So you are willing to make a real Judah out of me. (He spits on the packet of money and makes for the door. The police bar his way. He looks at them pityingly). You serve loyally, don't you!. What do you get for it, my brethren? More than a bone that slips from their table? I and you, and you, and you, have built for ages together, and now we are rich. Is it not time that we be happy together? Why carry death in your pockets when you can sing with me. Sing, brother!. (He sings the song triumphantly).

Seek no more alone to gather
    Riches, food or cloth to wear;
Mother Earth will brim the cup
    In plentitude for every heir.
Let us sing through life together,
    Bearing banners peace - engraven,
And each will fashion for the other -

Walter S. This craze has gone too far. We'll have to beat it out of them with clubs'.

Judah. There is your only means. You rule by the club. But what is stronger than these two arms? (He balls his fists). And what is deeper than the heart? Have you anthing greater?

Patrick. That's enough'. Lock him up'.

Police (surround him and lead him away).

Barbara (steals unnoticed out of an obscure corner; looks in terror at those present and fawns).

Patrick. What are you doing here, you old witch? A spy, eh'. They ought to be whipped, the lunatics.

Barbara. God forbid, Mr. Chief of Police. I didn't come to spy. I was just curious because I saw from far they were leading Judah. So, thinks I, it won't do any harm to take a little look. And let me tell you, dear sir, I am not sorry. The idea'. He knows such a fine secret and he's stubborn like a mule. He ought to be spanked, he ought. If I'd only tell them all that I heard over here, they would just hang him, so help me God'.

Walter S. (joyfully). Did you get that? So there is somebody left who understands a thing or two. Well, then, if you'll only go out and spread this story among the people, you'll get a fine bit of coin; And don't be stingy on the words.

Barbara. Of course I shan't be stingy'. You think it's a small thing, fooling a world? And you know, it's a long time since I knew something was funny. It'll be, I say, these twenty years, but I remember it as if the thing happened today, an hour ago. I'm taking a walk in the wood and then I look and I see a peddler, and with him I see her, the girl herself and no other.

And as they walk, he grabs her and starts kissing her till I got sick looking, and suddenly he jumps on her like a wild animal and she with such funny sighs - phui!,I nearly fainted.

Walter S. That will be quite enough. That we know already. What we want is that the people should know it'.

Barbar. What do you mean? You think I'll keep quiet about it? I'm going right out to spread the news. Only I am so sorry I haven't a cent to my name so's I could donate something to the temple. Such a chance comes once in a lifetime.

Walter S. (Gives her a packet of bills). Here is a present for you and if you need more, we have more.

Barbara (gazes a while at the money as if petrified, then cathhes it to her heart and crumbles up with the money on the floor. She hides it quickly in her bosom, uttering hysterical cries). Don't take it away, don't take it back from me, good people.

Dexter (unnerved by this scene). No one shall take it from you. It is yours.

Barbara (looks in fright at everyone. Finally she leaps up from the floor and runs out).

Walter S. Ha-ha'. Now we are on the right road, my friends. She is the heart of publication. A thousand press-agents cannot accomplish what she can. Praised be the Lord in Heaven, we can once more sleep in peace. Let us say: 'Amen'.

All. Amen'.

Curtain falls.

Act IV , Scene 1.

(A day later, in Messiah's school. It is late afternoon.

Messiah (sits leaning against the table, bowed in deep reflection. On all sides his close followers are seated, quietly conversing among themselves. Mary, Henry and George are among those present).

Henry. We can't even find out where in the world we stand. One says that they want to call him to a trial, and another that they would just lock him up. There's no telling which.

George. What are they going to trial him for? Are we not permitted to speak as we wish in this country?

Henry. That's exactly what I say. We'd have to prove at the trial that he doesn't mean it as badly as all that. (Thinks a while). Not to pay taxes is not such a bad thing after all. But when it gets as far as machine guns, it might be better to pay off a little. What) say?

Messiah (lifts his eyes and looks at Henry somewhat suspiciously). Why, who is keeping you from paying, Henry? I never told those who could afford it not to pay taxes. I only ~~claim~~ say that it is an outrage to ~~skin alive~~ fleece those who have nothing. Do you understand? And for each one who has, there are infinitely more who have not.

Henry. Yes, to be sure; but couldn't they borrow somewhere for the time being? I mean -

Messiah. Borrow? So that they will have to labor with the sweat of their brows to meet a percentage for other parasites? What for? Why should your poverty-striken ones pay taxes? Because the government helps the railroad magnates rob the greater share of your labor to pay railroad expenses - in order to transport your own products?

Why?

For by your heavy travil billions of money accumulate. And shall millions at the same time be wanting bread? What is more, stop any passer-by and ask him. Hear what he has to say about it.

Henry. Till the citizens can have their say in this matter'. Meanwhile we are surrounded. It will do no good whatsoever.

George. We will stone them if they start anything. Take a look at that crowd out there. Our adherents are in creasing. We have with what to fight'.

Messiah. (Shakes his head pityingly). Yes - but my dream was not this. I believed that without stones -

Alma (rushes in). Judah is arrested. They looked him up yesterday, the murderers'.

Messiah. Yes, I know. The old way of the human animal. Might'. Force'. We have much to learn before we can understand ourselves differently.

Alma. We are surrounded by soldiers. I don't know what has happened suddenly, but horrible rumors are spreading among the people. (In tears). They are calling you a swindler and a tempter. (she weeps).

Messiah (soothes her). Ha-ha, what is there to cry about, sister? Haven't you heard of these things before? There is still much you will have to learn in this life, Can anyone predict who will stand as main witness against me at my trial? Perhaps those very ones who supped at one table with us and sang hymns with us under the same sky. Yet, when we were lifted sublimely in song they poured venom into our food.

Alma. True, true. Barbara is running about like a poisoned rat, carrying rumors, gossip and accusation everywhere – against you; and the widow Ickerton is telling everyone that it was you that seduced her sixteen year old daughter who is now at the hospital.

George. (leaps up as if stung). They are raising a gallows for you! They want to hang you without a trial. What has happened? What is this, anyway? Why are we sitting here like cattle? (He starts out).

Messiah (stops him). Where are you running, brother George? Why so excited?

George. We will drive them off with stones. Not all of them will let themselves be led astray. We will drive them off with stones. (Firing is suddenly heard. For a spell all remain speechless).

Messiah (looks a while on the terrified, furious George and says mildly). Better go out and tell them not to offer resistance, I want no blood, George, no blood––

George (in tears). But they want yours.

Messiah. I am one and those without are many. But not enought that we may carry out our mission. Your resistance is justified, George. For no one but yourself has any right over your own life. When one life leaps on another to devour it, blood will be shed in the struggle; and if blood is the issue of this struggle, then if you can, let your foe purify himself in his own blood. We, however, can not offend. For stones are weak in the face of loaded machine-guns. Therefore I shall go. And when I shall be no more, you will remain, and you and you.

(He points at those nearest him). Not one one man alone, my friends, can a world be built. I have awakened you, and you shall awaken others, and so on until the day will come. But come it will!. (He moves toward the door).

Mary. (falls to his knees, embraces his feet and weeps). Don't go, we need you, my son - for tomorrow, for the time to come. We cannot live without you. Let us escape from here. Come, I will lead you disguised from all evils. I beg you, let me lead you.

Messiah (calmly). To flee is to deny one's self. And to deliver one's self up with joy is to be born again. Do you not wish for my resurrection?

Mary (weeps at his feet, speechless. A noise is heard from without. They all become more restless. Police enter and surround him).

One. Is your name Messiah?

Messiah (nods).

Policeman. I arrest you in the name of the law of the United States of America.

Messiah (looks at them a while. They lower their eyes, and he walks to the door with slow, rythmical steps).

Curtain falls.

Act IV., Scene 2.

(On the mountain, before a gallows, not far from the temple. A few hours later. The sun has already set. About the gallows is a large rabble with curious, hungry, terror-stricken eyes).

Barbara (scampers about madly and then stops near a group). God is giving him what he deserves, never fear! Sixteen year olds he wanted. Nothing less!

A man. It is just like us to let any young rascal lead us by the nose. It's a good thing we came to our senses inx time.

A woman. What do ye mean, 'in time'? Ye'll first find out later what trouble he's done us. Three young girls've already been discovered in the hospitals. All three his victims, never fear! The paper writes today that he did away with a mint of money which well-to-do people entrusted to him. Did ye ever here of such out-and -out robbery?

Barbara. They even tell that he sent all the money to the Bosheviks at Moscow.

A woman. Really? Just took our earnings and shipped them off - eh?

A man. And to think that the United States' mails is not ashamed to transport it! We've got some system, we have.

Barbara. How do you know he sent it through the mails? There's plenty other ways. Leave it to them. They send air-planes over here secretly and at night they ride away with the money.

A woman. And who is guilty if not Lindbergh himself, for, if he hadn't been the first to cross the ocean in a plane, they wouldn't know the trick.

A man. What do you get out of argui;g? All I know is they're taking our money out and I wouldn't at all be surprised if they even smuggled in wheat and sold it at a loss.

Another. At a loss? They oughta be shot for it! Did you ever hear anything like it? - Selling for nothing!

A man. What ~~then~~ do they do it for? Where's the sense in it - giving away bread for nothing!

Another. Yes, that's right! What for?

The first. Why, of course, they do it on purpose so's we'd be forced to stuff ourself on bread and get fat. Who don't know nowadays that it's not healthy to be fat?

The second. That wouldn't be so very bad. But they do it so's we shouldn't have enough bread!

A woman. How's that?

The first. That's how it is. The more wheat we'll have, the less we'll have bread to eat.

A third. What are ye battin' about? How can that be?

First. I don't know myself, but it's a fact.

A woman. I'd be afraid to eat their bread, so help me God. Those devils would put poison in it!

A man. You bet!

The first. And that's what we get for being too good. Letting such robbers rule over us!

Barbara. Did you ever see such eyes? They ought to be torn out, the way he used to look me up and down. (Mysteriously). My heart went down into my boots everytime I was alone in the house with him. You never saw such an animal!

A woman. What is this? You knew him well?

Barbara. Did I'., He grew up in my arms. But who knew he'd turn out like this? I would have strangled him when he was a baby, so help me God'.

(A great tumult is heard and a mob, wearing white shrouds and carrying flaming torches, comes up. Several with gorrila-like faces, are leading Messiah bound. A cross is immediately set aflame to one side and Messiah is quickly led to the gallows and the rope thrown over and pulled. Everything is done quietly, feverishly, breathlessly - as a robbery is. A tumult is again suddenly heard and the arrival of automobiles blowing horns. The crowd begins to stir restlessly. Matthew Norman runs up, a few State troopers behind him, and a mass of enraged students, women and men, followers of Messiah.

Matthew (leaps to the gallows). God'. We are too late'. (Pulls a jack-knife out of his pocket. A few students help him cut the rope. The hanged man drops to earth. He examines him). Dead. (He rises and looks all around him at the rabble). Beasts'. Beasts'.

David (appearing suddenly from nowhere, looks at the corpse on the ground and laughs contemptuously at the bystanders). We have advanced much in the last two thousand years since the birth of Christ. We have progressed. Then they would nail the victim to the cross and wait for a miracle to happen. Nowadays we let the cross burn to a side and hang the victim. Once the neck is tight in the rope, you can rest assured that the dead will not awak on the Third day. Ha-ha'. A rope about the neck is not a nail through the palm. No'. A rope is swift and certain. Ha-ha', we have advanced -much—

Some of the mob. Who is he?

—— The nerve of him.

—— Who is he? Who the devil is he?

David. A man, my fine people, who would only like to ask you why you had to conquer worlds for the sake of Christ's crucifixion. Why you had to shed so much blood in your Jesiutical crusades? Why you created racial hatred in the name of your crucified Christ, when today you crucified your own anointed with your own hands?

One. Crucified?

A second. Who is he?

A third. It's the peddler!

A fourth. Yes, that's him!

A fifth. Hang him!

A seventh. Hang!

George (tears through the crowd that had come with the professor). Gorrilas! Haven't you had enough? (A vicious tumult arises. It seems to be on the verge of a battle between two opposing camps. The militia scatters the infuriated rabble).

Matthew. (To the militia). Now that you have done your duty, you may return to your governor and tell him to send in a squadron of troops to this Sodmia. Perhaps, as a remedy, they'd discover for us where our police is hidden, and our mayor and our God's representative and all our law-giver and guardians of the law. They have all hidden like rats, because Boss Simpson has ordered it. And perhaps (thoughtfully) the governor himself knew about it and purposefully deliberated for two long hours so that we might arrive too late.

The future shall lay it bare'. (He points to the students). This youth will take its toll. I still hope to God that the creative element and our scholars and writers shall yet rule our land, not wild unbalanced Caesars and Chaliguras. (The students applaud. Gradually, some of them leave. From amidst those who remain George come forward).

George. You will have a long time to wait, professor if you depend on your divine hopes. It may be easy to wait and hope while living in a comfortable flat and eating your fill by the grace of God. We have waited long enough. I fear we shall have to roll up our sleeves and batter them with our fists. That is the quickest and surest way.

Matthew. Did He, your leader, teach you this? Was this His truth?

Alma (comes forward from among those remaining). The truth is what has just occurred'. Look'. (She points at the corpse). He was merely the idea, the light that shines through all time for those that have eyes to see. He was born to point out the goal. You see, my friends. The old world will not retreat without bloodshed. Look this way. The most beautiful sons of a nation are destroyed, and all you have done is xxxx to arrive too late.

Matthew. Perhaps you are ~~in the~~ right, my friend? Perhaps you know better? (He presses her hand). Good-night. Wex must think this over - we must think - (He leaves with all the students except a few intimates and Mary who remain standing at a distance.

David. (falls to the gallows and weeps bitterly). My son, what else could I have done to crown your birth? I was not weary to wander the earth, till I came upon the maiden Mary who was prepared to give you life. Why, then did they destroy you? Why? (Weeps). For to them, my son, you are both God and peddler. But to me you are soul of my soul. Your father is a peddler - nothing more. But you are flesh of my flesh and I have still tears left, and it hurts, so much. it hurts. (He weeps bitterly).

Mary (approaches, lays her hand on his shoulder, and [illegible] says). The sun has set, David, to rise again on the morrow, and in the wood there is still spread the broad bed beneath the foliage. The world is here while you are here. And once again the child will be born.

David (lifts his head and looks at her awhile. He takes her hand and rises. Then they go off together).

Finis.